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ABSTRACT

In language methods courses, there is an attempted integration of the concept of individualized instruction into all of the regular methods class activities. This integration can occur as follows: (1) In teaching language methods, different language learning activities for individual students are considered. (2) In discussing methods for teaching culture and advanced classes, individualization is planned according to student interest and motivation. (3) In particular cases, grouping for remedial and enrichment purposes is recommended. Parts of the methods course are individualized to illustrate the process and not for the purpose of individualizing the course. This partial individualization occurs in three areas: (1) The theoretical aspects of the course are individualized in testing, discussion grouping, and outside reading procedures. (2) Reading methods are individualized on the basis of learning packets, which are accompanied by video tapes; in addition, there is an individualized unit on how to write a learning packet, as well as a description of the use of small groups. (3) Individualization in the performance phase is based on team teaching in actual university language classes, which allows methods students to put into practice the theory and techniques they have observed and read about. A brief outline to be used as a model for individualization is provided. (LG)

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INDIVIDUALIZATION AND THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE METHODS COURSE

In my methods class I try to integrate the concept of individualized instruction into all of the regular methods course activities rather than treat it as a separate topic in an effort to give it the attention it deserves. I have a syllabus of the course for any of you interested to show how the topic is introduced day by day and week by week into the course. Here are a few examples of this integration process:

1. As we deal with teaching techniques in the various language skills, we also discuss methods for providing different learning activities for students who need different approaches or who have reached different levels of achievement.

2. As we work within the areas of culture and the teaching of advanced classes, we also work with the concept of individualizing according to differences in interest and motivation. Independent study skills are also brought in at this point in the course.

3. When we consider the problems of intermediate courses and the problems of articulation from school to school and level to level, we find it appropriate to work in the concepts of remedial and enrichment grouping.

Most aspects of our methods class deal thoroughly with the concept of individualization. However, the methods class is far from being totally individualized. The parts of the course which are individualized are set up that way to illustrate the process and not specifically to individualize the course.

<u>Individualizing the theoretical aspects of the course</u>:

Most methods courses usually try to hit a balance between theory and practice. The theoretical aspects of my course have been indivi-

dualized less than the practical. Much of the theory is handled through background reading, lecture and discussion. Therefore, I decided to develop a testing system over this part of the methods course that could be taken care of outside of the class. This testing arrangement illustrates the concepts of mastery learning and self-pacing:

1. Students pick up study questions over the required reading material and programmed check sheets to test their comprehension.

2. When they feel ready to take the test, they go to the lab where tests are filed and ask for the appropriate test. They can take tests any time they like.

3. They must pass with a score of 90%. If they don't pass, they must retake until they obtain this score.

In the discussion of theory, our class is individualized to the extent that we divide into small discussion groups. We do this to illustrate various grouping procedures as well as for certain practical considerations. Sometimes we group by language (we have a general methods course for all FL majors and minors). Sometimes we group in terms of interest and experience. Sometimes we group in terms of language skills (for example when we are investigating teaching of language through culture, we divide into four groups (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to determine what language skills are being developed in certain culture-oriented activities. Thus students discover that if they want to work on listening comprehension in conjunction with a culture lesson, they should do an audio-motor unit or perhaps a culture capsule. If they want their pupils to do more speaking in conjunction with culture lessons, then they should do simulations and role-playing, etc.). Every so often we group to determine how the rather disconnected sections of the methods class become

integrated meaningful units of instruction (here students talk about fusion of skills, planning, sequence in the instructional process, etc.)

Some of the outside reading is also individualized. Bibliographies are available for students who want to extend their readings in various areas according to language. And that is about the extent to which I individualize the theoretical aspects of the course.

Methods of teaching

I am sure that the most substantial part of our courses deals with "methods of teaching such-and-such." We may show techniques through the use of films, videotapes, visits to classrooms, or actually demonstrate the technique to our students. We may describe and tell about certain techniques or we may have students simply read about them. I've attempted to individualize this aspect of the course in a number of ways:

1. 2 years ago I attempted to individualize the teaching of reading with learning packets and the whole bit. In the learning packet I explained the objectives, indicated the reading assignments with tests that had to be passed at a certain level, and described a culminating project. I also made a couple of video tapes demonstrating certain teaching techniques with one of my university French classes. Students had to view these tapes and then meet in small groups to discuss the techniques. I abandoned this activity this year - it was a good idea - but the subject was too vast, broad, and cumbersome. I think the idea could work with a more limited subject. (I was going to bring copies of the learning packet - but when I pulled one from the files a few days ago and took a good look - I was too ashamed to bring them along!) But try it out! Maybe you can make it work!

2. I have also presented the unit on how to write a learning packet individually in the form of a learning packet. I had to do one

for each language. Since this activity helps students to prepare for one of the projects and demonstrations they do, it has been quite successful, so I brought a copy of one along.

3, We use small groups in the following ways:

a. We use small groups divided by language to discuss and critique demonstrations students have viewed or techniques they have read about. We have also divided the class by language for various demonstrations given by guest teachers and professors.

b. Students make observations of junior-senior high and university language classes and then attend a small group seminar which the experienced teacher conducts explaining his teaching procedures and answering students' questions.

c. Methods students meet in small groups with students who are in the student teaching phase of their training. This meeting gives individuals a chance to explore some of their feelings of fear and apprehension.

d. High school panelists come to the methods class to present their views on what they think a good FL teacher should be. Then methods students divide into small groups for discussion with these students.

And <u>that</u> is the extent to which I individualize the "methods of teaching" aspect of the course.

<u>Performance phase of the methods class:</u>

In the performance phase of the methods class, students put into practice the theory and techniques which they have observed and read about. This is probably the most important part of the methods class and usually the most slighted because it is time consuming. Mini- and peer-teaching activities conducted in the methods class take up valuable

class time. It is in this part of the methods class that individualization can be most effectively employed. Here are some of the things I do:

1. For bit-teaching of grammar points I divide the students into several teams. Each team is responsible for preparing an individualized unit. A deductive and an inductive presentation relating to the same grammar point are designed by two of the team members. Each of these presentations is recorded on tape or video taped by two other team members using the other teams members as pupils. A learning packet is prepared by the fifth team member in which written programmed versions of the presentations are found along with written practice exercises. Two more team members write and record various learning activities (drills, questions, etc.), pretests, and posttests. The other students in the methods class (who by the way are on other teams doing the same things) are given the packets and are required to attend the taped presentations at their convenience (the tape is made available in the lab at all hours). On a specified day the methods class is divided into small groups and the members of the team work with their peers on the learning activities based on the presentations. Some individuals ask for the tests immediately. The team members must administer these tests. Others continue to practice with the learning activities, some in small groups and some individually with tapes. This experience gives the methods student practice in his new role as a teacher and an understanding of the roles of the paraprofessionals and student assistants he will be using.

2. Students do team teaching in university classes (for example a group of five students in the methods class went into a first year Spanish class, divided the class into five groups and conducted various

conversational activities.) Many of the professors on the staff have been so enthusiastic about these visits thay they have invited our students back as often as they like to try their hand at whatever they like.

3. To evaluate bit-and peer-teaching I have developed a pass-no-pass form which covers teaching skills in the psycho-motor, cognitive and affective domains. This form is filled out by the peers being taught, the methods instructor, and the student himself. The student must obtain a certain overall rating to pass. If he does not, then he must make the improvements necessary and do the bit-teaching again. On the evaluation form, the improvements needed are indicated. I have copies of this form for anyone interested. And <u>that</u> is how I individualize the performance phase of the course.

What would you like to do with your course? Divide into several small groups and let participants proceed using the following model (if they find it useful):

I. Identification of aspects of the methods class you would like to individualize.
II. Techniques for individualizing these aspects of the methods class.
III. Problem exploration (evaluate each of the above techniques in terms of:
    A. Benefits to be derived
    B. Problems of implementation
        1. Facilities available
        2. Course content and structure
        3. Class size and make-up
        4. Training and background of methods instructor
        5. Administrative obstacles.
        6. Others
IV. Final suggestions